

OPERATION MIBA

Building on Your Military Experience for Career Success



Benjamin Faw
Captain, US Army
Harvard Business School

GMAT[®]
mba.com

CONSIDERING AN MBA

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photo credit: marines.mil

Why Consider an MBA?

Each year thousands of experienced military personnel consider earning a Master's of Business Administration (MBA) degree. Active duty, National Guard, and reserve personnel should include this crucial educational step as part of their career plans.

The MBA is a prerequisite for most of today's management positions, and transitioning soldiers are discovering it takes even more than a four-year degree and military service to impress corporate recruiters. Because the military has taught you strong leadership and management skills, an MBA is a perfect complement to honing these skills further.

For those remaining in the armed forces, an MBA or other graduate management degree can help you develop new ways of thinking and tackling problems that will give you a competitive advantage and help you serve more effectively. The degree can also accelerate advancement and improve assignment selection in a military job market that can be just as rewarding as the civilian business world.

Whether you're transitioning out of the military or moving up the ranks, a graduate management degree will place you a cut above other candidates.

“ **Similar to how the military provided basic and advanced training within my chosen field, I have found the MBA to be a great foundational launch pad for the transition back into civilian life.** ”

Benjamin T. Faw
Captain, US Army
Harvard Business School, Class of 2014

THE MBA ADVANTAGE



photo credit : navy.mil

Military + MBA = Career Advantage

The management and leadership skills you have developed through military service will prove to be strong assets in business. By strengthening your professional portfolio with a graduate management degree, you become particularly desirable to those making hiring and assignment decisions.

An MBA helps you build critical analytical skills and long-term thinking that complement a military education. In general, programs will teach you how to think about business. Similar to your military experience, business school provides training on how to take an ambiguous situation, identify critical pieces of information, and then develop and design solutions. Courses in valuation will help you determine the long-term value of an asset while marketing courses will help you think about how products will

sell to various demographics. These courses will help you solve problems in business and will give you a new paradigm to apply to military challenges.

Besides improving your critical and strategic thinking, an MBA will enhance your network. Your classmates will help shape your education and will become invaluable resources for you in the future. Similarly, you will enrich your program, classroom, and community with your military experiences and leadership skills.

Military service provides a unique benchmark of leadership, strategic thinking, and performance that cannot be taught in a classroom. When combined, military and MBA credentials not only increase your potential for higher post-graduate earnings, but also sets you apart from the competition.

Alumni Profile



D. Wayne Robinson
 Command Sergeant Major, US Army
 President & CEO, Student Veterans of America
 MBA, Booth School of Business, University of Chicago

How did your military experience help you stand out as a business school applicant?

The path to an MBA is tough — it is supposed to be, but as a veteran I had a full arsenal of skills to overcome those obstacles and achieve success. Veterans are mentally strong, we're dogmatic about results, and we have certainly accomplished far more dangerous missions under the most extreme of circumstances. Our military is also comprised of individuals from all different races, creeds, and backgrounds, and my service afforded me the opportunity to work alongside and lead a very diverse population. Very few coming from the private sector have that experience, especially in such high pressure situations.

How was your transition back into the school environment?

While my time in the military sharpened my leadership abilities and equipped me with risk management skills, qualities I knew made me an asset, my transition to civilian life was not without roadblocks. After serving a cause greater than myself alongside my brothers and sisters in arms, it was a challenge to discover value in my new life. Pursuing an MBA provided me the opportunity to reassess my military experience through a different lens and channel my efforts toward success in the private sector.

“Military officers — both active and reserve — are increasingly well educated. In the merit-based promotion system, competition is tough. An advanced degree — especially an MBA — creates a competitive advantage. More importantly, it enhances the contribution one can make to national defense.”

Dennis M. McCarthy
 Lt. General, US Marine Corps (Retired)
 Counsel, McCarthy Law Offices
 Principal, Military Experts, LLC
 Previous Executive Director, Reserve Officers Association

POSITIONED FOR SUCCESS

There has never been a better time to enhance your military background with an MBA. According to industry surveys, many companies do not have succession plans in place to handle expected personnel shortages. MBAs with military experience will be in a favorable position to capitalize on this demand.

What are the characteristics of a successful MBA candidate? Talk to any number of MBAs and you will likely find a wide range of experience and undergraduate work. MBAs with military backgrounds are equally diverse, but they have a number of things in common that make them more desirable to business schools and employers, and increase their odds for success.

Skills: Business schools and corporate recruiters will recognize your value to their programs in terms of your finely honed skills in the following areas:

- Leading diverse teams
- Managing time and projects
- Handling real-world situations

Leadership Experience: According to corporate recruiters and school professionals, the key to success is getting relevant job experience before beginning your graduate management studies.

Military personnel have experience developing teams and working with large groups of people to accomplish organizational goals. Military personnel are known for:

- Values and ethics
- Problem-solving and decision-making skills

Level of Responsibility: Being responsible for the priceless lives of others is a major facet of military life. Early in their careers, soldiers assume responsibility for:

- Substantial budgets
- Costly equipment
- Mission-critical performance of their units

Employment Profile: The career outlook for MBAs with military backgrounds is bright, whether they remain on active duty or transition out of the military. Even during an economic downturn, business school graduates from the military report more favorable experiences than their civilian counterparts.

Military graduates are heavily recruited by business and government sectors alike. Job seekers from this group report:

- Higher placement rates
- Higher compensation packages

Alumni Profile



<http://bestreviews.com/veteran-graduate-locations>

Benjamin Faw
Captain, US Army
Harvard Business School, Class of 2014

How was your transition back into the school environment?

I thought the transition was bumpy at first. My transition was a little different than many other veterans in school; I had already completed over a year of work in the private sector. Despite this advantage, balancing academics, new friendships, and the host of other time commitments involved with school was challenging the first couple of weeks.

I knew success in the fundamentals in each course would prove useful all the way through my time in school. As a result I focused on learning these key concepts well, getting rest, and exercising. Instead of doing everything, I tried to do the important things well and that helped me avoid stress. After those first few weeks I was more comfortable in class and everything began to fall into place.

How did you leverage your military experience in the job/internship search?

I connected with veterans in every way imaginable, friends from prior units, school, or training at first, and when those sources were exhausted I expanded my focus. I talked with veteran alumni of my own MBA program, as well as veterans from other

MBA programs. You never know how powerful the far shared bond of service will be until you start reaching out to other veterans.

What other career paths did you consider for your post-military career?

I had a really exciting position with Tesla Motors, Inc. working in operations/supply chain and I pondered where that might lead versus pursuing a full-time MBA. In my own case, after consulting with several amazing mentors, I chose to go with the full-time MBA program.

How did your military experience help you stand out as a business school applicant?

Leading teams, motivating people, and innovating were three key threads I could talk about with a wealth of first-hand experience. Very few of my peers had the same amount of time in places that allowed the development of these sorts of skills.

What drove your decision to get an MBA over other graduate degree options?

I wanted a degree with massive flexibility given the rapidly changing economy and world of today, and I decided the MBA program was the best place to gain that flexibility as a veteran. I viewed the ROI, and still view it today, as something clear as far as increased earnings over a lifetime (which in most cases more than balance out with the costs of the MBA), and also as a very powerful form of unemployment insurance if the economy took a nosedive in the future. More important I hoped to build lifelong friendships with people who I would have a low chance of meeting without attending school, I hoped (and was correct) that these friendships would be worth far more than money to me.

“Many vets do not take advantage of the opportunity that the military offers in terms of financing higher education. This is one of the best deals the military offers.”

Brooks Abramson
Staff Sergeant, US Marine Corps
University of Illinois at Chicago

YOUR REASON FOR PURSUING AN MBA AND THE TIME AND RESOURCES AT YOUR DISPOSAL WILL HELP YOU DETERMINE THE TYPE OF MBA PROGRAM THAT IS RIGHT FOR YOU.

FINANCIAL AID 101

MBA Program Types

What types of MBA programs are available?

There are generally two reasons for obtaining an MBA: to acquire advanced skills to boost your career, or to change careers. According to the 2014 Alumni Perspectives Survey by the Graduate Management Admission Council® (GMAC®), more than 90 percent of business school alumni report that their graduate management education was personally and professionally rewarding.

Your reason for pursuing an MBA and the time and resources at your disposal will help you determine the type of MBA program that is right for you. Just as you want to be selective in your choice of school, you also want a school that is selective about its students. Your classmates significantly affect the quality of your MBA experience, so be sure to choose a school that uses the GMAT as a criterion in its selection process.

Type	Description
Two Year, Full-Time	Four semesters, or six quarters, taken over two years. School is the first priority. Most students do not work full-time. Students should have defined career goals for greatest return on investment. Students have resources to devote majority of time to study. Can be time- and money-intensive.
One Year, Full-Time	Typically takes 11 to 16 months. Very rigorous academic demands / schedule. School is the first priority. Most students do not work full time.
Part-Time	Courses scheduled throughout year often spread out over longer duration. Can take up to four to five years to complete. Many offer same specialization opportunities as full-time programs. Courses often scheduled outside of regular working hours. May not offer the same services as a full-time program e.g. career placement.
Executive	Typically completed during evenings and weekends over two years. Designed specifically to enhance the careers of working business professionals, managers, and executives. Usually more costly than full-time programs.
Joint/Dual	Many take three to four years to complete. MBA is partnered with another graduate program. Can take less time to complete than two separate degrees, (eg., JD/MBA, MHA/MBA).
Online	Typically self-paced. 24/7 access provides easy scheduling for those who work full time. Many online MBA professors are active business professionals. Can cost considerably less than traditional programs. May not offer other services (e.g., career placement).

Financing a graduate management degree as a military veteran does not dramatically differ from the process that civilians go through, except that there are some additional resources available.

There are two primary steps associated with financing the MBA:

1. Identifying all relevant costs associated with the program and degree.
2. Determining the resources available to meet those costs.

Identifying Costs

Visit Your Target School's Website

Most schools have a tuition and financial aid section on their website that provides a great starting point for researching costs associated with your intended degree. They also frequently list the points of contact available to address questions that arise during the financing process.

In exploring the website, you should check to see if the school has a Veteran's Club or Student Veterans of America chapter. Members of the club may be helpful in enhancing your understanding of the financial aid process or financial aid resources that may be unique to that school.

Identifying All the Costs

The cost to attend business school extends beyond tuition and fees. When building a budget, you must include books, course materials, room & board, health &/or insurance fees and other incidentals. You should build a budget for each school of interest, as the cost of living will vary by location. Finally, if you are thinking about studying abroad, participating in an international study trip/internship during your program, or working in another part of the country or a different country, you should also plan to budget for travel expenses.

Determining Resources

Post-9/11 GI Bill

The Post-9/11 GI Bill provides eligible veterans of the Iraq and Afghanistan wars with funding to attend various higher education institutions. A veteran's eligibility for funding is determined by how many months of active duty he/she served in these wars.

More information at va.gov.

The Yellow Ribbon Program

The Yellow Ribbon Program is a provision of the Post-9/11 GI Bill that provides additional funding for eligible veterans enrolling in participating schools. Schools provide a specific amount of funding to student veterans, and the Department of Veteran's Affairs matches that amount. These funds are provided in addition to Post 9/11 GI Bill funds. Not every veteran is eligible for the Yellow Ribbon Program. For eligibility visit benefits.va.gov.

Federal Student Loans

Federal student loans are an option to cover expenses not covered by other financial resources. Fixed interest rates and flexible repayment options make these loans more attractive than private ones. Start by visiting studentloans.gov.

MBA Scholarships, Fellowships and Assistantships

Many schools provide fellowships and/or scholarships to applicants who meet specific criteria. A number of schools also offer graduate assistantships, which require some type of work (teaching, research or administrative) in exchange for tuition remission and/or a stipend. Talk to the schools to which you're applying to learn more about various opportunities.

Corporate Sponsorships

If you have already transitioned out of the service and are working full-time, talk to your current employer about funding options. Many organizations are willing to fund a portion or all of the education of their employees.

Stepping Into Your Future

The steps outlined below will help you understand the MBA admissions process and ideal timeline to move forward with your MBA degree. Although the time frame shows an average for MBA preparation, our research shows that people take anywhere from three months to three years to navigate the path to graduate business school.

Pre-commissioned and junior officers and ROTC participants: Start early!



An MBA was very important to my transition out of the military and into the business world. The academic curriculum allowed me to build a base of business knowledge while also learning to adapt the skills and experiences I acquired as an Army officer. Perhaps more importantly, I had the opportunity to learn from a diverse group of colleagues and broaden my perspective.



Blayne Smith
 Captain, US Army
 Executive Director, Team Red, White and Blue
 MBA, University of Florida



More than four out of five graduate business alumni agree that they make an impact at their company, have meaningful work, and work for a company that values their skills and abilities.

2014 Alumni Perspectives Survey by GMAC.

Assess & Analyze	Gather Information	Find Your Program	Prepare	Apply Effectively	Make Your Decisions
Evaluate	Evaluate	Prepare	Prepare	Commit	Commit
2 years out	18 months - 2 years out	18 months out	12 months out	9 months out	6 months out
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assess career goals. Consider the value of the MBA. Analyze cost vs. benefit of the MBA. Talk with others who've made the transition. Visit your base Educational Service Office for more information. Start looking for a mentor. Consider timing of transition and the MBA process. Evaluate family considerations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Get a mentor. Build a LinkedIn Profile. Connect with veterans one year ahead of you in the process. Network, network, network. Engage local SVA chapter. Check available transition resources. Research MBA program timelines and application schedules. Review your finances to determine school funding needs. Check on tuition assistance programs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Begin your program search. Check out mba.com/military for a list of schools that welcome military personnel. Consider what type of program is right for you. Select your "dream school" and three to four others, and determine entrance requirements. Reconsider funding resources: GI Bill, tuition assistance, loans, scholarships, and grants. Register for prerequisite or supplemental classes. Check in with your mentor. Start building your business wardrobe for information sessions and interviews. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prepare for and take the GMAT® exam. Talk to your ESO about reimbursement for the GMAT® exam registration fee. Attend information sessions. Begin application process. Contact programs of interest. Ask about military clubs, groups, and resources. Consult with career counselors. Get advice from your mentor. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Find a strong recommender who knows you and your strengths. Build your resume. Have peers and friends who are veterans and civilians review it for clarity and language. Prepare and submit completed applications. Consider how you will market yourself and create a professional look. Be sure to seek financial aid. Be prepared to explain in your application or interview any gaps in your academic or employment record. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seek an on-campus interview. To prepare for your on-campus interview, be prepared to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Build your story. Demonstrate your "fit" with the school. Market yourself. Practice with friends. Practice mock interviews with your mentor and network (colleagues and alumni). Focus on leadership. Understand your financial aid package.

GMAT[®] FACTS



photot credit: army.mil

What is the GMAT[®] exam anyway?

The Graduate Management Admission Test[®] (GMAT) helps business schools assess the qualifications of applicants for advanced study in business and management. Your GMAT scores are the best predictor of academic performance in the first half year of a graduate management program.

What does the GMAT exam measure?

The GMAT exam measures the quantitative, verbal, analytical writing, and higher order reasoning skills you have developed over a period of time in your education and work. It allows you to showcase the skills that matter most to schools and businesses.



photo credit: navy.mil

“ ... [L]ike any test, you can improve your score through preparation and practice. I chose to attend a GMAT requiring school because the schools that require it generally have stronger reputations than schools that do not. ”

Carla Sevilla
 Captain, US Marine Corps
 University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill

Carla Sevilla
 Captain, US Marine Corps
 University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill

Format and Scores

There are four sections of the GMAT[®] exam (see table below). The Analytical Writing Assessment, the Integrated Reasoning section, the Quantitative section, and the Verbal section, take about four hours to complete.

- Total GMAT scores range from 200 to 800. Two-thirds of test takers score between 400 and 600.
- Scores for the Analytical Writing Assessment range from 0 to 6 in half-point intervals.
- Scores for the Integrated Reasoning section range from 1 to 8.
- The Verbal and Quantitative scores range from 0 to 60. Scores below 9 and above 44 for the Verbal section or below 7 and above 50 for the Quantitative section are rare.

Unofficial scores from the Verbal, Quantitative and Integrated Reasoning sections, along with the Total score, are available immediately after you complete the test. Within 20 calendar days of testing, you will receive an email with a link to access your Official Score Report, which will include your official Analytical Writing Assessment score.

You may choose to send your scores to up to five programs at the test center. Additional score reports can be sent after your test date for a fee.

More Support:
mba.com/us/the-gmat-exam/gmat-exam-format-timing

GMAT Test Section	# of Questions	Question Types	Timing
Analytical Writing Assignment	1 Topic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analysis of Argument 	30 Minutes
Integrated Reasoning	12 Questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multi-Source Reasoning • Graphics Interpretation • Two Part Analysis • Table Analysis 	30 Minutes
Quantitative	37 Questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data Sufficiency • Problem Solving 	75 Minutes
Verbal	41 Questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading Comprehension • Critical Reasoning • Sentence Correction 	75 Minutes
Total Exam Time			3 Hours, 30 mins

GMAT PREP TOOLS

MBA FAQs

Preparing for the GMAT® exam will help ensure success on test day. Here are several study resources for you to consider.

GMATPrep® Software

This free software is available to help you prepare for the computer-adaptive GMAT® exam using real retired GMAT test questions. mba.com registrants can download the Mac and PC compatible software at mba.com/gmatprep.

GMATPrep® Exam Pack 1

Simulate the real GMAT test-taking experience and boost your preparation by enhancing your free GMATPrep® software download with two additional full-length practice exams.

GMATPrep® Question Pack 1

Boost your free GMATPrep software download with 404 additional GMAT questions and answer explanations, including 200 Quantitative, 180 Verbal, and 24 Integrated Reasoning. Includes questions never before seen in any other GMAT exam product.

The Official Guide for GMAT® Review

The Official Guide for GMAT Review features 900 practice questions of all types with answers and explanations, math review, essay topics, and a diagnostic test. In addition, you have access to an online study companion that includes the same practice questions and answer explanations, and Integrated Reasoning questions; and a 100-question diagnostic exam to help focus your test preparation efforts.

The Official Guide: Quantitative and Verbal Review

These supplemental guides are designed to help you focus on the test section in which you need most improvement. Each supplement offers nearly 300 real GMAT questions not found in The Official Guide for GMAT® Review. They also include answers and explanations, test-taking tips and strategies, and a comprehensive math or English grammar review.

GMAT® Paper Tests

Three sets of three easy-to-download paper tests contain real GMAT questions that are out of circulation. Each set of paper tests includes timed sections, an answer sheet, and a way to convert your raw score to the equivalent GMAT score.

Integrated Reasoning Prep Tool

The Official GMAT Integrated Reasoning Prep Tool features 48 IR items and answer explanations, unlimited practice sessions, customizable question sets, and tools to practice pacing.

GMAT Focus® Quantitative Diagnostic

Using real, retired, GMAT questions, the GMAT Focus® diagnostic tool evaluates your performance in critical quantitative testing categories, provides you with a highly accurate score, and ranks you in relation to previous GMAT examinees. By knowing your strengths and weaknesses, you can better prepare for success.

Most Commonly Asked Questions:

Q: What funding options exist to help me pay for my MBA?

A: Military personnel may have access to the GI Bill, and reservists or National Guard members may be eligible for home-state funded grants. In addition, most state funded universities offer “in state” tuition to those on or just leaving active duty. Many schools offer 20–50 percent tuition assistance to desirable candidates based on perceived quality of the applicant, unique characteristics brought to the program, and a candidate’s “fit” at the school. Some schools reserve financial awards for military personnel studying full-time and offer low-cost deferred payment programs. Information about sources of low-cost education loans can be obtained from schools’ admissions offices.

More Support: mba.com/military

Q: What does a school’s cost say about its overall quality? What do I need to know and what plan should I follow to get into the right school?

A: Quality is important, especially among the faculty who will teach you and the students who will be your partners in learning. However, higher cost doesn’t always mean higher quality. Schools are known for particular strengths and have recruiting relationships with certain types of employers. Before giving serious consideration to an MBA degree, look beyond school and plan your future career, then seek a program that advances that plan.

More Support: mba.com/us/find-and-compare-schools.aspx



photo credit: af.mil



MBA FAQs

COMBAT TO CLASSROOM

photo credit: af.mil

Q: I have been out of college for several years and have concerns about taking the GMAT exam. Should this prevent me from pursuing an MBA?

A: Relax—people from all over the world with different degrees of life experience have taken the test successfully, and you can, too. Many resources are available to help you understand, prepare for, and succeed on the GMAT exam. Admissions counselors use GMAT scores as one of several sources of information about an MBA candidate.

More Support: mba.com/us/the-gmat-exam

Q: Are there options to help pay for my GMAT exam?

A: DANTES (Defense Activity for Nontraditional Education Support) will reimburse the GMAT fee for eligible military personnel. To be eligible for reimbursement, you must possess a current Armed Services of the United States identification card and meet additional requirements

Visit: mba.com/military-reimbursement

To request reimbursement online, go to: dantes.doded.mil.

A printable version of the reimbursement form can be found at: mba.com/military-reimbursement-request.



“Paying for school as a veteran isn’t much different than paying for school as a civilian, except you have a few more resources at your disposal. Planning for school in the midst of transitioning out of the military, however, can pose a challenge. The best advice is to start early and use backwards planning.”

Augusto Giacomani
Captain, US Army (retired)
Booz & Company
New York University, 2011

How can I best transition from the military into an academic setting?

Before entering the military, you were accustomed to a classroom environment, but now that you have spent some time working and serving in the military, you have been away from the academic world.

We’ve interviewed military personnel like you who’ve made the transition from military service to the classroom.

To learn more about candidates with military backgrounds and their experiences both in the classroom and beyond, please visit mba.com/military.



photo credit: navy.mil

MOVING FORWARD

Did you know?

DANTES (the Defense Activity for Non-Traditional Education Support) will reimburse your GMAT exam fees if you are an active member of the US military.



Scan here for more info

Whether you are moving up the ranks or transitioning into a career in business, an MBA can help you succeed. Now is an ideal time to set career goals and evaluate your options for achieving them. The best way to get started is to talk to your Educational Service Officer and start looking for a mentor to help you through the process. Leverage the resources close by to get a head start, and talk to schools along the way about what they offer to students with military experience. A number of resources are available to help you take the next step.

Visit mba.com

You'll find ways to:

- Use CareerLeader® to plan your post-military, post-MBA career
- Use the Reflect™ assesment to evaluate your personal and professional qualities and help you develop your admission interviewing skills
- Evaluate MBA programs and concentrations that are right for you through mba.com School Finder
- Attend MBA recruitment events of interest to you and identify schools to consider visiting
- Download free GMATPrep® software
- Register for the GMAT® exam

Statements for you to complete

I believe an MBA is right for me because...

Traits that I have in common with MBAs and business professionals include...

The post-MBA careers that best fit my personal strengths, interests, abilities, and work-related values are...

The type of business school, company, and corporate cultures that would suit me would be...

Questions for Prospective Schools

Do you have clubs or affinity groups for military personnel?

What will happen if I am admitted, then deployed?

What parts of the application do you weigh most heavily?

Questions for Current Students/Alumni

What is it really like getting an MBA?

Does/did the program meet your expectations?

What would you do differently if you were to start the MBA program all over again?

What's the student culture at your school like?



photo credit: marines.mil



GMAC® is a proud partner of Service 2 School.

The Operation MBA Planner is an educational tool for military personnel who are interested in obtaining their graduate business degree. More information is available by visiting mba.com/military or by sending an e-mail to operationmba@gmac.com.

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